



FREE WITH ISSUE

FE Week

PAC CHAIR TAKES ISSUE WITH BIG TOPSLICERS

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ATL — 85PC OF FE STAFF THOUGHT OF QUITTING

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ESF WINDOW FINALLY OPENS

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Elves running festive college fair

Santa's elves teamed up with Mrs Claus to run the grotto at Blackpool and The Fylde College's festive fair.

The college's University Centre transformed into a winter wonderland, featuring a Christmas market, snowboarding experience, face painting and festive bouncy castle.

The event, expected to have raised more than £1,000 for Brian House Children's Hospice, included seasonal gift and craft stalls from local businesses as well as musical

entertainment from learners.

College staff, who took on the role of Santa's little elves, were also on hand to give course advice to prospective students.

Andy Iredale, director of marketing, said: "Our first ever festive fair was a huge success. We brought staff, students and the local community together for a healthy sprinkling of Christmas cheer which saw more than 800 people through the doors at our University Centre."

Blackpool and The Fylde College elves, who are college staff in their day jobs, run the festive fair grotto

TRAILBLAZER PROCESS 'OUT OF CONTROL'

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Government adviser Nigel Whitehead warned that the Trailblazer apprenticeship process was "out of control" as he revealed fears national occupational standards (NOS) were in "danger" of being bypassed.

The group managing director of programmes and support at BAE, and author of the government-commissioned 2013 Review of Adult Vocational Qualifications in England, said the system had been set up "without much reference back to the importance of the NOS as a foundation".

"My honest appraisal is that I think it is out of control," Mr Whitehead told more than 150 awarding organisations at the Ofqual 2015 conference in Birmingham on Tuesday (December 8).

He added: "There is a danger there is a

moment in time when we will accidentally bypass the NOS unless we take the care to recognise their importance."

The UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES), which counts Mr Whitehead as one of its commissioners, is responsible for NOS across the UK.

However, the UKCES was "struggling to get that voice properly heard" when the new apprenticeship standards were being drawn up by Trailblazer employer groups, said Mr Whitehead, and with its funding set to cease, "that danger moment is amplified".

It's an issue he said he had even raised with Skills Minister Nick Boles — "and he acknowledges that we have some work to do to work out how that function is going to be

performed," said Mr Whitehead.

The comments appear to have put Mr Whitehead on collision course with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), which said research carried out by the UKCES itself showed only 5 per cent of employers had a good knowledge of NOS, while 44 per cent of the economy was not even covered by NOS.

"Employers are free to refer to national occupational standards to support the development of their Trailblazer apprenticeships — most have chosen to do something different," said a BIS spokesperson.

But a UKCES spokesperson said: "We believe NOS are vitally important and, as Mr Whitehead said, they are the raw material on which high quality apprenticeships and

many vocational qualifications are based."

Mr Whitehead's employers at BAE, which is on a number of Trailblazer groups, also backed him, saying they "recognise the value of NOS and their role in ensuring apprenticeships in our sector meet their requirements".

"We believe they are an essential starting point on which high quality apprenticeships and many vocational qualifications should be based," said a BAE spokesperson.

According to the UKCES, NOS are developed "for employers by employers through the relevant Sector Skills Council or Standards Setting Organisation" and are "statements of the standards of performance individuals must achieve when carrying out functions in the workplace, together with specifications of the underpinning knowledge and understanding".

However, with UKCES funding set to end, question marks also hang over the devolved



Nigel Whitehead

Continues on page 2



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NEWS

Area reviews not launched to 'save money', Education Secretary tells Lords committee

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Post-16 education area reviews "haven't been set up in order to save money," Education Secretary Nicky Morgan (pictured) claimed in an evidence session with the House of Lords Social Mobility Committee.

Ms Morgan was grilled about the influence of FE funding issues on the post-16 education area review process by former Labour Education Secretary Lady Estelle Morris on Wednesday (December 9).

Thirteen area reviews across two initial waves, covering more than 130 general FE and sixth form colleges, have been launched so far by the government, which has said the "need" to move towards "fewer, often larger, more resilient and efficient providers," underlies the process.

However, when Lady Morris questioned whether the government intended to make savings through the area reviews, Ms Morgan said: "The area reviews haven't been set up in order to save money, they have been set up to ensure sustainability of institutions."

The session was covered live on Twitter by *FE Week* and reaction to Ms Morgan's comment was swift. Among those to respond



Nicky Morgan

was London Work-Based Learning Alliance governor Rob Brooks, who tweeted: "I don't believe that for a second."

And Dr Fiona Summers, technical standards manager at YMCA Awards, tweeted: "This goes against what we are hearing elsewhere re area reviews = efficiencies."

Both Ms Morgan and Skills Minister Nick Boles were questioned in what was the final evidence session of the committee's inquiry into social mobility in the transition from school to work.

And, moving on to apprenticeships, Lady Morris queried whether the government would meet its 3m starts target with, for example, 80 per cent of learners at level two.

Mr Boles said level two apprenticeships were needed, and that he was actually concerned about maintaining level two numbers once the levy on large firms was introduced because, he said, employers would be able to spend more of their levy voucher entitlement if they opted for higher level programmes.

"If you're a big employer and you're paying a huge levy bill there no way that you're going to be able to employ enough level two apprenticeships to use up your levy", he said.

"To some extent this makes us slightly worried about our 3m target ... if you ended up with everybody just offering higher and degree apprenticeships we would be hard-pressed to be creating 600,000 a-year."

Topslicing 'outrageous leeching' of public cash

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EXCLUSIVE

The issue of topslicing with lead providers skimming off around 40 per cent of government funding for delivery before dishing out contracts has been branded an "outrageous leeching of taxpayers' money" by Public Accounts Committee (PAC) chair Meg Hillier (pictured).

The Labour MP told *FE Week* she would be calling on the National Audit Office (NAO) to investigate instances such as the country's biggest Skills Funding Agency (SFA) contractor, and former publicly-owned provider, Learndirect retaining 36 per cent of total funding (£68.1m) from 75 subcontractors in 2014/15.

"It is an outrageous leeching of taxpayers' money by contractors that aren't delivering any public service and are just acting as conduits," she said.

Ms Hillier added: "I am going to ask the NAO to investigate this and we [members of the PAC] will consider what we will do about it as a committee once we have seen the evidence."

It follows a long campaign against excessive topslicing by *FE Week* that was launched in the paper's

pilot edition in June 2011.

Lead contractors who retain government funding, through what they usually call management fees, before finding a subcontractor to do the training for the remaining sum, is also a subject currently being looked at by the SFA.

An SFA spokesperson said it was "undertaking compliance work" to determine whether any providers had ignored a ruling that detailed information about management fees they charge subcontractors be published online by November 23.

It is expected to be finished "by the end of the calendar year".

The SFA warned in September that funding could be suspended where declarations were missing after the deadline.

It requested that information on management fees was available on websites, and included current supply chain fees and charges provided on 2015 to 2016 subcontractor declaration forms.

However, *FE Week* checks on the websites of a number of leads



Meg Hillier

Continued from front...

nations' use of NOS.

"They are waiting with baited breath to see if they have to build their own foundation or whether they can rely on the English system to actually then continue to provide a foundation," said Mr Whitehead.

A Scottish government spokesperson said it had "a commitment from Mr Boles to work with the devolved nations on this".

But, she said: "We are disappointed with the UK government decision to stop funding the UKCES, as this will have implications in a number of areas such as the NOS which are used widely across all four nations of the UK to underpin vocational education."

She added: "Unfortunately this is another example of where another UK government decision is having unintended consequences for skills activities across the UK."

A Northern Ireland government spokesperson said it was working "to ensure NOS remain the national standards."

The Welsh government was yet to respond.

See editor's comment and cartoon on page 6

FE WEEK NEWS IN BRIEF**Administered status**

Skills Minister Nick Boles has placed Amersham and Wycombe College into administered status after being warned of its "worsening bottom line since 2007/08".

FE Commissioner Dr David Collins' team was sent in over Skills Funding Agency financial concerns and found "operating deficits up to and including 2018/19" were expected.

The findings came out the same day as a commissioner report on North Shropshire College. It was inspected over its application for "exceptional" financing. Mr Boles said it should "explore alternative" future options.

See feweek.co.uk for more.

with numerous subcontractors found that a number had missed the deadline.

And while Learndirect met the deadline, its management fees revealed topslicing of around 40 per cent in a number of instances.

It defended the charges saying suppliers delivered "Learndirect-branded services using our systems and products in line with the delivery standards laid down by Learndirect."

"We provide marketing, the content, and the quality, audit and contract management framework within which they sit," added a spokesperson.

The SFA has previously said that management fees should be no higher than 15 per cent of the value of the lead provider's contract.

And Peter Lauener, Education Funding Agency and SFA chief executive, told *FE Week* last year that he would find a 40 per cent topslice "hard" to justify "because it's kind of obvious that what is taken as a management fee is not going to frontline education or training".

It's a view of high management fees shared Ms Hillier. "I am very interested in and worried about this issue," she said.

"We are very worried as a committee about FE funding in general and this is a waste of a large amount of the precious little money available."

The NAO declined to comment.

NEWS

Quit thoughts in 85pc of FE staff — ATL

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Nearly nine in every 10 FE lecturers and leaders have considered quitting because of their workload, a survey by the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) shared exclusively with *FE Week* has indicated.

The ATL is quizzing FE staff in the It's About Time campaign, launched on November 20, and has found that 85 per cent of respondents had given serious thought to walking away from the profession.

A tutor in adult and community learning (who cannot be named due to survey anonymity) said: "We have too much paperwork to complete, therefore simplify and diminish the paperwork."

An FE college tutor said: "I have to write extensive feedback, but I know that 95 per cent won't or can't be read.

"Tests could be standardised to save time in designing them and the marking schedule."

The aim of the campaign is to raise awareness of the impact of the workload on all education staff — and the FE sector results were given exclusively to *FE Week*.

It also aims to identify tasks which are most problematic and help find practical solutions so staff can cut their own workloads.

Since its launch, 134 FE professionals, including, lecturers, teachers and leaders, have filled out the campaign survey, which remains open.

It posed 16 questions, revolving around workload issues, including 'what shouldn't be done by FE staff?' and 'what would help FE staff to reduce their workload?'

The results showed that 77 per cent of FE staff felt their workload was not manageable and nearly 80 per cent said they didn't have time to update their subject knowledge or skills.

Dr Mary Bousted, ATL general secretary, said:

"Our survey shows seven-in-ten FE staff still think their workload is unmanageable and over eight in ten have considered quitting working in education because of it.

"Heavy workloads and stress are nothing new, but the current situation is affecting the health of staff, making many want to leave the profession."

Out of the FE staff who took part in the survey 48 per cent said they never took a break of at least 40 minutes during the college day, 5 per cent said they did every day, 12 per cent said they did on most days, 11 per cent said once a week and 23 per cent said less

gradually start to assume functions in 2016".

It was also revealed that an independent chair would lead a "small board made up primarily of employers, business leaders and their representatives".

And Mr Boles has said, in response to a written parliamentary question from Labour MP Peter Kyle, that the chair and board members would "be appointed through public appointments".

"The outcome will be announced as soon as the process allows in 2016," he wrote.

However, Mr O'Brien claimed the government had not addressed the needs of the charity sector so far in its levy consultation or in the spending review.

"I think it's fair to say that it's been missed out. It's unfortunate that they didn't consider it," he said.

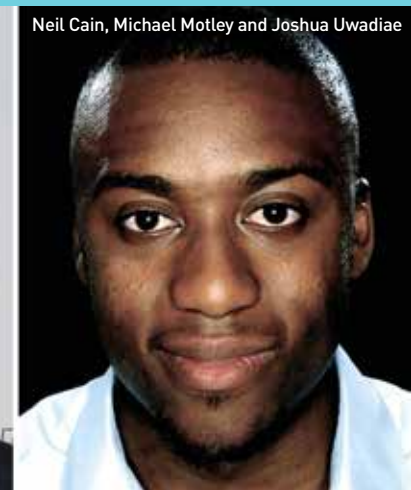
The CFG initially raised its queries in a response to the apprenticeship levy consultation, and then followed it with the letter to Mr Boles on December 1.

The letter, written by CFG chief executive Caron Bradshaw, points out that "the charity sector employs 821,000 people across the UK, 61 per cent of which are employed on a full-time basis" and estimates that "1,200 charities will be subject to the levy, collectively costing around £70m".

A BIS spokesperson said it "needed to make sure the levy is right for all employers".

"This is why we are engaging with as many employers as possible to understand how the levy will work for their business and giving them the opportunity to work with us on the implementation design," he said.

He added: "Further details of the new institute will be announced in due course."



Neil Cain, Michael Motley and Joshua Uwadiae

WHO WILL BE APPRENTICESHIP CHAMPION?

One of these former learners will be crowned apprenticeship champion of the year next month.

Neil Cain, aged 51, Michael Motley, 61, and Joshua Uwadiae, 22, were among finalists unveiled by the National Apprenticeship Service having been shortlisted from 11 regional award winners announced earlier this year.

They will find out if the title is theirs at the National Apprenticeship Awards on January 26, at Grosvenor House, London. National winners of the advanced, higher and intermediate apprentice of the year awards will be announced, along with apprenticeship employers of the year. See www.feweek.co.uk for more.

often than once a week.

Ms Bousted said: "The government needs to acknowledge that it is responsible for much of the current workload because staff have to keep re-planning what they are doing to keep up with changes to the curriculum and its funding cuts have led to colleges cutting jobs — particularly among admin and support staff."

She said the information gathered would be used in talks with the government to try to encourage it to consider the impact of education policies on workloads and try to get

it to reduce the burden on education staff.

A Department for Education spokesperson said: "We are working with the profession and education experts to take action on the root causes of teacher workload, including looking in more depth at the three biggest concerns teachers raised — marking, planning and resources, and data management."

A Department for Business, Innovation and Skills spokesperson said: "As independent institutions it is a matter for colleges to decide how they manage their staffing arrangements."

THIRD SECTOR BODY CALLS FOR CHARITY MEMBER OF NEW INSTITUTE

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A third sector umbrella body has written to Skills Minister Nick Boles calling for charity representation on the new Institute of Apprenticeships board — and for an exemption to the large employers' levy.

The Charity Finance Group (CFG), which works to improve financial management in the voluntary sector, wrote to highlight challenges the government's apprenticeship levy could pose for charities.

It also called for the interests of the sector to be represented on the board of the new institute as a solution to concerns over issues such as charities' levy funding going towards apprenticeships for private firms.

Andrew O'Brien, head of policy and public affairs at CFG, said there had been a lack of government guidance on how the apprenticeship programme under the levy system would work in the charity sector.

"There are opportunities to still shape what the structure looks like, rather than just already having to deal with an existing structure and crowbarring charities into that," he said.

The Institute will, according to the government's English Apprenticeships: Our 2020 Vision document released on December 7, be "fully operational by April 2017 and ... will

Providers hit back at Saudi claims

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Providers have hit back at claims that establishing new learner ventures in Saudi Arabia as part of the Colleges of Excellence (CoE) scheme might lead to "bankruptcy".

It was reported last week in Education Investor and by *FE Week* that bosses of the scheme were struggling to get the number of learners they expected after attracting providers such as Lincoln College, Moulton College and Activate Learning to sign up to multi-million pound deals.

And while UK Trade and Industry (UKTI) Education, which was responsible for bringing together consortia to bid for the contracts, conceded CoE had "encountered challenges," providers defended their involvement.

Activate Learning, an education group that includes Banbury and Bicester College, City of Oxford College and Reading College, signed up to the CoE programme as part of the Oxford Partnership, a consortium with GEMS Education Solutions and Moulton College.

Sally Dicketts, chief executive of Activate Learning, said: "The Oxford Partnership entered into the agreement with CoE recognising that it would be a long-term investment.

"We remain fully committed to our colleges in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which also represent a social investment in empowering women and equipping them with the skills required to access meaningful employment."

Interserve, an international support

services and construction group, acquired the Employment and Skills Group, a UK-based provider of vocational training, skills and employability services that had signed up to CoE, at the end of last year.

An Interserve spokesperson said: "We deliver a range of educational services for our client, CoE. We are pleased with the progress we have made and recently opened a new state-of-the-art technical college for CoE.

"More than 1,500 young Saudi people — the majority of whom are female — attend our colleges where they are prepared for their future careers. We are proud to be part of CoE's forward looking programme and remain committed to it."

Although the projects were thought to be providing new revenue streams for an increasingly cash-strapped domestic college sector, such ventures have not been without their critics. Ofsted boss Sir Michael Wilshaw, for instance, once urged colleges to focus on "Deptford not Delhi," as previously reported by *FE Week*.

A UKTI spokesperson said: "While the CoE programme has encountered challenges, the UK providers are working with UKTI and CoE to ensure the success of the programme.

"UKTI continues to support the Saudi government's ambitions to broaden and improve Technical and Vocational Education and Training provision in the country."

Pearson and North Hertfordshire College have declined to comment. Highbury College, Moulton College, Nescot, Lincoln College, Hertvec and CoE did not respond.

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LEVY AND DIGITAL VOUCHERS

DAY TWO -17TH

FROM FRAMEWORKS TO STANDARDS

DAY THREE -18TH

ASSESSMENT - PLANS, END-POINT ASSESSMENTS AND
APPROVED ORGANISATIONS

WORKSHOP TOPICS WILL INCLUDE:

FEES, FUNDING, LEVY AND DIGITAL VOUCHERS | FROM
FRAMEWORKS TO STANDARDS | ASSESSMENT - PLANS,
END-POINT ASSESSMENTS AND APPROVED
ORGANISATIONS | DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS
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NEWS

APPRENTICESHIP FRAMEWORKS CUT-OFF SCRAPPED

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The government has scrapped plans to stop funding apprenticeship frameworks after 2017/18.

The cut-off, that would ensure providers were only delivering new Trailblazer standards come 2018/19, was first announced in October 2013, but speculation has been mounting in recent months as to whether ministers were looking to step back from the date.

Fuelling such speculation has been frustration in the sector at the supply of new standards, while there has also been a low take-up for those already available. But it was revealed in the government's English Apprenticeships: Our 2020 Vision document (pictured), published on December 7, that the 2017/18 end of frameworks has now been dropped.

According to the document, the government's "aim was for all new apprenticeship starts to be on standards from 2017/18" instead of existing apprenticeship frameworks.

But, it added: "We think the recent announcement of the apprenticeship levy warrants giving employers longer to consider which occupations they will require apprenticeships for.

"To allow for this, we envisage a



migration from apprenticeship frameworks to standards over the course of the Parliament, with as much of this to take place by 2017/18 as possible.

"We will stagger the withdrawal of public funding for new starts on framework apprenticeships as employers take on apprentices on the new standards, and give reasonable prior notice to training providers of this so they can review their training offer."

A Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) spokesperson declined to comment on how long a "reasonable prior notice" was and whether the same minimum notice would apply for all frameworks.

He simply said BIS was "currently developing the approach and will provide

details in due course".

The government was forced to defend progress with the implementation of Trailblazers in June, after *FE Week* reported that official figures indicated there had been just 300 starts on the new programmes in nine months.

Another *FE Week* report on August 6 revealed frustration was growing among Trailblazer apprenticeship designers, with many of the new standards still awaiting government approval for delivery almost a year after they were published.

Just 68 standards had been published by BIS as ready for delivery at the time of going to press. Yet the government said in August that more than 350 standards had either been delivered or were being developed.

Shadow Skills Minister Gordon Marsden said: "What is clear from BIS being forced to slow down the transfer to Trailblazer apprenticeships is it comes from their substantial failures to sign off proposals submitted by the employer-led consortia in a timely fashion.

"It underlines the way BIS staffing and budget

cuts by government have undermined the department's capacity to deliver changes. Over-confidence on timelines and under-capacity to act on them is a potentially toxic combination."

An Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) spokesperson said: "A positive outcome from AELP's representations is the announced transition from the old apprenticeship frameworks to the new standards.

"Giving employers and providers adequate notice and staggering the funding changeover will help smooth the introduction of the reforms. The BIS spokesperson declined to comment on Mr Marsden's comments.

See feweek.co.uk for more reaction to the 2020 Vision document.

OVERVIEW OF 2020 VISION

- Apprenticeship minimum standards up from 62 per cent to 65 per cent from 2016/17
- Public contract bidders to demonstrate contribution to apprenticeships and skills for deals worth £10m-plus and lasting more than 12 months
- New statutory targets, through the Enterprise Bill next year, to encourage public sector bodies to employ more apprentices, with consultation this month setting out rationale behind workforce minimum of 2.3 per cent
- Outcome-based success measures for apprenticeships from 2016/17
- Apprenticeships standards and assessment plans submitted to new employer-led Institute of Apprenticeships from April 2017
- Performance tables feature 16 to 18 apprenticeship results from January 2018
- Digital Apprenticeship Service online portal rolled out from October

MIXED REACTION TO LIFTING OF TRAINEESHIP RESTRICTION

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The removal of rules allowing only providers rated outstanding or good by Ofsted to get lead contracts for traineeships from next academic year has received a mixed response from the sector.

Grade three ('requires improvement') and non-inspected providers can also deliver the programme, but only as subcontractors. However, the government revealed on Monday (December 7), in its English Apprenticeships: Our 2020 Vision document, that the restriction would be lifted.

"Now traineeships are fully established and getting excellent results for young people, from 2016/17 we will place them on a par with other provision by removing this requirement," it said.

The government will be hoping the move, long called for by the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP), will allow for an improvement on last academic year's 19,400 starts.

But concern has been raised that it could undermine quality of traineeships designed to help 16 to 24-year-olds secure an apprenticeship or employment through, for example, improving their English and maths skills and work experience.

Angela Middleton, chief executive and founder

of Kent-based provider MiddletonMurray, which runs traineeships through good-overall Ofsted rated subsidiary Astute Minds Ltd, told *FE Week*: "I don't believe it is the right way forward.

"There are a lot of grade one and two providers who would like to receive [more traineeships] funding. I would like to see them given priority."

The SFA was unable to comment ahead of publication on Thursday (December 10), after *FE Week* asked if it planned to allow inadequate-rated and uninspected providers to deliver traineeships as lead contractors.

However, an AELP spokesperson said: "It's very unlikely you'll see inadequate providers offering traineeships because in the case of independent learning providers, a grade four [inadequate] inspection by default results in the SFA withdrawing the contract for everything."

He added the change "should make a major difference in expanding the number of [traineeships] places".

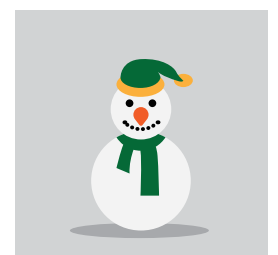
Meanwhile, a spokesman for the Association of Colleges said: "More flexibility to allow a greater number of colleges to offer traineeships is something we've been encouraging the government to look into. It is very gratifying they have listened."

See feweek.co.uk for an expert piece on traineeships by Ms Middleton



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FE WEEK COMMENT

Out of control, again

The government saw fit to listen to Mr Whitehead on qualifications nearly three years ago.

His recommendations resulted in the public funding of, it has been estimated, around 6,900 adult vocational qualifications severed.

He is clearly someone that is listened to among ministers and at Whitehall.

So his warning that the Trailblazer process was 'out of control' will hopefully also be listened to.

He, along with the UKCES, makes a case for national occupational standards (NOS) that Trailblazer employers, no less than BIS, should take great care to heed.

But it's a warning that also came with worries for devolved governments who rely upon the UKCES for their own NOS in developing apprenticeships.

And perhaps one of the most damning criticisms of this particular issue, and also the breakneck speed of reforms, comes from North of Border about the 'unintended consequence' of policy shift after policy shift.

It just adds to that out of control feel that the FE and skills sector has sadly become accustomed to nowadays.

Chris Henwood

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TOP 2020 VISION TWEETS

@TheLEPNetwork
Important role for #LEPs in HMG's Plan for increasing quality & quantity of 3m #apprenticeships by 2020

@NCSSkills
Apprenticeships: Our 2020 Vision - "We want to give employers in England flexibility on how they use their levy contributions..."
Good news?

@YourAAT
Big changes: Government unveils its vision for #apprenticeship sector

@Parent_Guidance
3 million #apprenticeships by 2020: Govt sets out its case. More, better quality and in line with employers' needs

@myworksearch
Apprenticeships are delivering real benefits to business and young people 3 million #apprenticeships 2020



Staggered and late ESF tenders 'affecting bid quality'

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The staggered launch of bidding windows for £650m-worth of European Social Fund (ESF) cash between next month and May could result in providers competing on the basis of "available resources rather than delivery expertise," the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) has warned.

The first bidding window — for provision for young people considered not in education, employment, or training (Neet) — opened on December 7 and the second is expected to launch today (December 14).

The rest are expected to open "at regular intervals between January and May 2016," said a Skills Funding Agency (SFA) spokesperson.

"We won't know how many contracts there will be until after the procurement exercise is completed at the end of May 2016," she said.

But Paul Warner (pictured), director of employment and skills at the AELP, said providers who were unaware of future tenders could win a contract only to find

delivering it might hamper their ability to deliver ESF provision put to market at a later date.

Such a situation might, he suggested, put ESF contract-winning providers off going for further contracts despite having the necessary expertise because, for example, staff were located in a different region.

"With each specification likely to be launched gradually over a number of weeks, providers may find it difficult to allocate resources sensibly, which may lead to some having to choose which specifications to bid for on the basis of available resources, rather than delivery expertise," said Mr Warner.

"We are in active dialogue with the SFA and have asked a number of questions regarding the procurement and contract mobilisation process, which we hope to have answers to shortly."

The first bidding window is set to shut on January 18 — giving just 27 working days excluding weekends and public holidays to research, write and submit bids.

And then, after initial tenders totalling £14.86m have been

awarded on March 30, winning bidders will have only 11 working days before delivery commences from April 14.

It follows a summer in which ESF-funded providers were forced to lay-off staff amid delays in issuing new ESF contracts, as the government sought to iron out regional devolution issues with local enterprise partnerships (LEPs).

"These short timescales compound the delays and problems we've seen with ESF funding," said Mr Warner.

"Providers who laid off staff because of the delays might now struggle to bid for new contracts because they do not have the staff any more or even shut provision."

The five local enterprise partnership areas to which ESF money would be heading in the first bidding window were revealed by *FE Week* on December 4 and confirmed by the SFA and ESF just days later.

The SFA and Lep Network declined to comment on the concerns raised by Mr Warner.

See page 12 for an ESF expert piece by Jo Lappin, chief executive of Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership

COMMENTS

Funding cut for back-to-work support

If the government fails to recognise the nature of long-term unemployment then a huge opportunity will be missed to improve the main back-to-work programme and to help many tens of thousands of disadvantaged people into sustainable employment.

The currently proposed definition of 'long-term' unemployed claimants (it seems) doesn't actually reflect the reality that many 'cycle' in and out of work for years even prior to making 'new' out-of-work benefits claims.

If a claimant has been out of work for 2 out of the last 5 years then they should be considered as 'long-term unemployed' and have access to the new Health and Work Programme as early as possible.

Otherwise, a lot of people are going to be 'institutionally parked' with Jobcentre Plus, who are far too stretched to properly support them for

21 months (after their initial 'intensive' 3 months with Jobcentre Plus).

Mark Cosens

BIS report hails 'substantial impact' of FE on unemployed

Good to see government realising what we have long known, but why no mention of this in the FE minister's speech at the AOC Conference?

David Melville

Rejected National Colleges plans 'not sufficiently mature'

Typical of this Government not to support manufacturing or a proven renewable energy success at a time when global warming clearly is having an impact on us in the UK.

Paul Cook

Social mobility tsar Alan Milburn labels FE an 'absolute jungle'

Well, whatever we might think about Alan Milburn's views on FE (or, indeed, social mobility) let's not forget that his beloved party was in power from 1997-2010 and they had many years to address these problems and sort it out.

John

Bankruptcy warning on Saudi college ventures

Just wondering how these "partnerships" square with the, undoubtedly comprehensive, and thoroughly PC, equality & diversity policies of these colleges?

Reminds me of another college which accepted that RSA 'delegates' would only be taught by male lecturers.

John



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COMMENTS



Festive wishes and New

What a year it has been for FE and skills. Over the past 12 months we've had a General Election and seen the announcement of a 3m apprenticeships starts target by 2020, among plenty of other goings on.

But with Christmas being a time to spend with loved ones and to enjoy

festivities, some familiar sector faces explain what they'd like to see under the FE Christmas tree. Here is just a handful — visit www.feweek.co.uk to see them all. And whatever the New Year may hold for the sector, the team here at *FE Week* wish you all a very merry Christmas.



Jeremy Benson

Ofqual executive director for vocational qualifications

Students and employers expect vocational qualifications to support the development of the skills needed for a productive economy and a healthy society. Ofqual's approach reflects these expectations: we have introduced a simplified qualifications framework, and we check systematically that awarding organisations meet our requirements and award valid qualifications.

FE faces some serious challenges, but there is no excuse for poor qualifications, so we make no apology for the requirements we set.

We will talk in the New Year about the findings of our recent work. But first, there is Christmas to enjoy. I wish all *FE Week* readers a peaceful break.



Martin Doel

Chief executive of the Association of Colleges

This year has been extremely busy for the FE sector as a whole. Colleges have shown their worth, over the past year, as the bedrock on which our skills system rests and in providing routes to success to a wide range of students. As we end the year the financial situation following the spending review is better than we may have anticipated. While the year ahead will be far from easy, I'm sure that, as ever, colleges will rise to the challenges ahead. I wish all college staff and FE sector colleagues a merry and relaxing Christmas — it's certainly been well-earned.



Dr Mary Bousted

General secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL)

During 2016, ATL would like the government to recognise the unique value of FE in providing vocational education and training, which benefits learners and ensures employers can recruit a skilled workforce and contribute to the country's economic growth. The government should ensure the sector can prosper through proper funding and a professionalised workforce, and it should suspend the constant reform which has resulted in considerable turbulence during the previous five years. It must also acknowledge the FE sector, rather than employers, has the skills, knowledge and years of experience of delivering apprenticeships, so colleges should be central to apprenticeship reforms.



David Hughes

Chief executive of the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education

We have a very exciting year ahead, as we formally become the Learning and Work Institute next month. Our focus will be firmly placed on achieving five critical priorities – building local capacity for more opportunities for lifelong learning, growth in apprenticeships which start young people on rewarding careers, supporting more people into good jobs on the road to full employment, developing new ways to help adults achieve basic skills in maths, English, Esol and digital, and opening up new pathways for people to learn and earn.



Neil Carmichael

House of Commons Education Select Committee chair

Christmas is a time of preparation, expectation and celebration. The FE sector should be celebrating its many achievements this year — not least the work of many colleges in ensuring students attain maths and English GCSEs. There is much to prepare for in 2016 as the sector moves centre stage in the delivery of the government's skills agenda and apprenticeships and I expect the best colleges will rise to these challenges. But, most importantly, ahead of this, I hope all *FE Week* readers enjoy a well-earned restful Christmas with friends and family.



Sally Hunt

General secretary, University and College Union

After years of damaging budget cuts, top of the Christmas wish list is stable funding for FE. As colleges undertake area reviews, we hope that the views of the dedicated FE workforce and learners will be taken into account. We would also like to see the new apprenticeship levy extended to cover other types of work-based learning, as we fear that many good courses will be unnecessarily lost because of the focus on apprenticeships. Finally, we hope the government will review its decision to cut back on Esol provision, which seems frankly nonsensical at a time of refugee crisis in Europe.



Sally Dicketts

Chair of the Women's Leadership Network and chief executive of Activate Learning

For me the last year has been characterised by connectedness. Within the Women's Leadership Network our members have shared expertise and approaches to leadership that have benefited teaching and learning in their institutions.

This sense of pulling together has also been seen across the sector, which was able to make its voice heard in the build up to the autumn statement.

This resulted in less dramatic cuts than we had anticipated. My hope for the year ahead is that colleges can overcome fears of competition to continue to work together to deliver the very best experiences and outcomes for learners.



Sue Husband

Director of the National Apprenticeship Service

Merry Christmas to everyone and thank you for your support over the last year. My New Year's resolution is to make sure the National Apprenticeship Service continues to play its part, across the whole sector, as we work together to support more people and businesses to access the great opportunities that apprenticeships offer. During 2016 and beyond we will work with you to prepare employers to invest their apprenticeship levy wisely, for their business and for their apprentices, as one apprentice and one employer at a time we work towards 3m apprenticeship starts that we can all be proud of.

New Year hopes



David Igoe

Chief executive, Sixth Form Colleges' Association

Christmas came early for sixth form colleges with the Chancellor's autumn statement announcing he would protect the rate for the life of the Parliament and open the door to academy status and the VAT rebate. The New Year will reveal just how many colleges take that opportunity and just what that means for a sector which increasingly sees its future working alongside schools and being part of the wider post-16 education landscape. The imminent festive season will be a time to reflect on all this and make resolutions to go forward in a positive frame of mind and seize the new opportunities that are unfolding. At the heart of Christmas is a new birth and a new hope. There is a message here which chimes directly with what we should be all about — ensuring that young people are at the heart of all we do. It's their future that matters. Structures and sectors are just the means to that end and we have a duty to try to get it right.



Gordon Marsden

Shadow Skills Minister

I'm hoping first of all that hard-pressed FE providers, staff and students get some break over Christmas from the avalanche of concerns over area reviews, loan changes, Esol and adult skills cuts that the government has bombarded them with this year. I hope 2016 will be a better year for real progress on joined-up thinking allowing the sector to think about organic growth and change, especially on the apprenticeship front, without being faced by impossible deadlines or so-called goodie bags which turn out, Scroogelike, to be largely empty.

Skills Minister Nick Boles was yet to respond with his Christmas message at the time of going to press



Paul Joyce

Ofsted deputy director for FE and skills

I will remember 2015 as a busy year, both for the sector and for Ofsted. I was delighted to be appointed to head up the FE and skills remit and continue to enjoy working with such committed people in the sector to raise standards. The sector continues to improve despite the significant challenges faced and this is indeed commendable. I hope everyone enjoys a break over the festive period. The New Year looks certain to be busy and I hope it brings continued improvement in the sector so more learners experience good and outstanding provision.



Dr Sue Pember

Hollex director of policy and external relations

The Ofsted annual report applauded the success of ACL Community Learning Partnership pilots and how opportunities they provide are well matched to community needs. Hollex members want to replicate that work nationally in 2016.

Stability is essential. If we move to block grants and outcome agreements, we need to know that will last for at least 10 years. We can then concentrate on ensuring productivity and individual prosperity. Adult education and learning has a big role to play. We need an adult education service covering everything from improving basic skills, career change opportunities, engagement in education and personal wellbeing.



Peter Lauener

Chief executive of the Skills Funding Agency and Education Funding Agency

Christmas is a time for a bit of rest and reflection, as well as the all-important Strictly Come Dancing final, so I hope everyone enjoys a break (and my money is on Jay for the glitter ball trophy). Everyone who is part of FE should feel proud of their role in helping 2,613,700 people this year take the next step in education or an apprenticeship. My own highlight of the year was seeing the fantastic success of Team UK in the World Skills competition. It shows we have a world class system when we are at our best, as well as fantastic young people. 2016 will bring plenty of new challenges — area reviews, planning for the levy, devolution. But FE has a much better spending review settlement than we all feared so here's to a great 2016.



Stewart Segal

Chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers

This has been a challenging year although we have had some very positive messages about the importance of work-based training and particularly traineeships and apprenticeships. As a result there should be opportunities for all providers to expand their provision in these priority areas although there is still a lot of detail we need to understand. It will no doubt be challenging along the way but if government listens and keeps the programmes simple, we can ensure that high quality providers can make the long-term plans they need to succeed. We wish everyone a successful 2016.



Shakira Martin

National Union of Students vice president for FE

Merry Christmas to all FE students and those working in sector. For this Christmas, I would like to see the government taking the time to understand FE during the entire area review process, ensuring that students get the best deal to access education, quality teaching and learning. I also want to see learner voice at the heart of all changes made. I would like money to be invested back into Esol provision, and see that money generated from the apprentice levy is used to increase all apprentices wage to at least the national minimum wage.

My students and the sector never fail to amaze me, no matter what changes are thrown at us. For this reason I ask the government to invest in FE to give many more students a chance to change their life, to break the cycle of deprivation and give the teachers the pay they deserve.



Iain Wright MP

Chair of the Business, Innovation and Skills Select Committee

My Christmas cheer for FE would be a recognition that it is needed and as an important driver of social mobility, upskilling and economic growth in local areas. A period of stability and certainty would also be welcome. The challenges to come in the New Year are ongoing area-based reviews, further financial challenges, more clarity about the apprenticeship levy and how quality assessment impacts upon FE provision of higher education. This is why the select committee's look into the future of FE, as well as the joint inquiry between the BIS and Education committees on careers guidance, are timely, and I hope that readers of *FE Week* engage with us as we look at evidence.

PROFILE



Human beings and society need far more flexibility and visionary thinking so that people can retrain and can follow an interest



GOING THE DISTANCE

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Wednesday, December 16, marks four years to the day that Dr Ros Morpeth returned to her post as chief executive of the National Extension College (NEC) to save it from obscurity.

The 69-year-old first worked at the Cambridge-based distance learning college in the late 1970s and performed the same saviour task back then.

Recognition of her dual feat came with an OBE for service to FE in the Queen's Birthday Honours list this summer.

"When I first took over as chief executive of the NEC in 1987 it was heading downhill, with a big deficit," she said.

"Learners were at risk of being pushed to one side in favour of educational publishing.

"But NEC became viable once more, with an increased turnover, new income streams and a move to web-based learning and the

acquisition of the Michael Young Centre in Cambridge.

"When the opportunity came for me to do it all over again, I was able to bring the experience of distance learning I had built up nearly twenty years earlier to re-establishing NEC."

However, without Morpeth's will to make her own way in the world — that didn't involve the family furniture business — the NEC might not be with us today.

She grew up just outside Newcastle in a village called Jesmond with parents Douglas and Joan, and younger sister Caroline.

Her dad ran a local furniture store, which he and his brothers had inherited from their father, so after finishing secondary school Morpeth was expected to move into the family business.

After finishing school, Morpeth moved to London to do a year's furnishing course, and then went into the family furniture business back in Newcastle, where she worked for

five years.

But when she turned 22, Morpeth says she decided she wanted to see more of the world and travelled to Kingston, Jamaica, for a year to work in a furniture company.

On her return home, she then worked at a variety of "Avant-grand" manufacturers and retailers of furniture.

But with a lust for more and a newfound love for travel from her Jamaican experience Morpeth travelled to Greece for several months to carry out her work abroad.

However, she decided to come back to the UK after reading an influential article in the Guardian on the women's movement and she was determined to get involved.

She says: "It was a very exciting time and it was at that point that I realised that I was really missing out if I didn't go to university."

So Morpeth started to study for her A-levels so she could apply to universities as a mature student.

She wanted to carry out a degree in social

anthropology and secured an interview at the University of Cambridge in 1971.

But before Morpeth completed her A-levels she was given an unconditional offer by the university and chose not to finish her A-levels.

She smiles and says: "I do think about it sometimes — and wonder if I'd ever be clever enough to do them now."

On the completion of her social anthropology degree Morpeth did a PhD in Northern India on the impact of the Green Revolution and on her return to England she applied for a course editor opening at Open University precursor NEC, which she spotted in her local newspaper.

"I didn't know anything about editing but I was interested in education and to my amazement I was offered the job," she says.

She adds: "The mission of the NEC was about what I had been through — it was about opening up opportunities and giving second chances.

"So on a personal level I really empathise with the students, and I think one of the first

It's a personal thing

What's your favourite book?

There are four books. It's the Alexandria Quartet by Lawrence Durrell. I read them many years ago but I keep going back to it because it tells the same story about the same group of people in Alexandria, in Egypt, but each book tells it from a different perspective

What do you do to switch off from work?

I love travelling anywhere really. But I suppose my favourite places are India, Thailand, Morocco, Tunisia and Italy

What's your pet hate?

It's spin. So politicians or anybody else who says one thing when they actually mean something completely different — I hate it. It's mainly people in public life and they have been told that they have got to present a situation in a particular way. It's nonsense basically isn't it?

If you could invite anyone to a dinner party, living or dead, who would it be?

Michael Young, the founder of the National Extension College, and Nelson Mandela, as I think they would get on really well

What did you want to be when you were growing up?

I don't think I had a dream job. I grew up in a family business and I used to work in my father's carpet and furnishing shop, and I supposed I assumed that was what I would do with my life

things I discovered when I went to NEC was that there were all these wonderful study skills materials on subjects like how to write essays and how to analyse and answer questions.

"I thought, 'if only someone had given me those when I first started at university'."

After working in a variety of roles within the NEC, Morpeth worked her way up to the chief executive of the non-profit organisation by 1987.

However, by the time the early 2000s approached, Morpeth believed she had "probably done everything" she could for the NEC and went off across the globe travelling and doing consultancy.

She stepped down from the NEC role after 16 years to work across the world for the International Extension College.

"It was basically about using distance education to help developing countries build up their educational capacity," she explains.

She expresses how proud she is that there are now a "mass of open universities in India, South Africa and the Caribbean".

She did this until 2011 when she heard the NEC was in a "desperate situation" and she decided to step back in to the organisation as full time chief executive on a voluntary basis.

She says that there had been a merger between the NEC and the Learning and Skills Network (LSN) which resulted in the LSN selling the NEC's site in Cambridge.

By November that year the LSN went into administration, leaving the NEC either in administration too or looking for a new organisation to take it on.

She says she had to persuade administrators to keep the NEC operating as an educational charity and "put as much pressure on them as possible".

"We had no reserves, but we got very good support, particularly from the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, who helped us in every way they could and we did get the NEC out of administration," she says.

Four years on Morpeth says that the NEC has now stabilised and says in this financial year



Morpeth at the Commonwealth of Learning conference in Durban where she was awarded an Honorary Fellowship in 2002

Morpeth at the Commonwealth of Learning conference in 2002 enjoying the evening meal



From left: NEC chair of trustees Geoffrey Hubbard, Morpeth and NEC founder Michael Young celebrate NEC's 25-year anniversary



Morpeth at her degree ceremony at Ely Cathedral with Helen Lentell being awarded an Honorary Doctorate for her contribution to distance learning in 1994



Morpeth (right) and younger sister Caroline in 1950

they have had "a bit of a surplus from living on a breakeven budget".

She explains that despite it being a "very scary and dire time" when she was taking the NEC out of administration she felt the NEC "fills a gap that other providers don't".

Morpeth explains that there is less provision for adults who are looking to reskill and have a second chance and says a lot of their students are in their 20s and 30s and want to move in to careers like teaching.

"There is less and less opportunity for people to do that now, and so through the NEC we could reach out to the people who can't get into college on a regular basis," says Morpeth.

Reflecting on her 29-year-career at the NEC, and the effort she put into taking the organisation out of administration, Morpeth still has a few changes she would like to see.

She says: "One of the things that everybody can see and understand is that people are going to need to retrain at different points in their lives.

"I think both human beings and society need far more flexibility and visionary thinking so that people can retrain and can follow an interest."

Morpeth explains that she would "like to see an FE system where this is recognised and supported" as she fears that "we are moving towards narrower and narrower definitions".

"So there is a future I would love to see — and it's one that is based in something that we all know is important — and it's important for social mobility, and it's important in every way," she adds.

On a final note Morpeth talks about how far the NEC has come since she started.

"I think after spending so much of my career working there, and not just me but everybody who worked here put their efforts into building up the organisation, and there's always been a very strong commitment to learners and to quality," she explains.

"And I don't think I could ever bear to see the NEC disappear without a fight."



THE INDY SCENE

John Hyde is the chairman of HIT Training, a hospitality training provider that operates across England, and on the second Monday of every month he writes in *FE Week* about issues affecting independent learning providers

The FE and skills panto

Apprenticeships reforms are rapidly metamorphosing into pantomime. When the ugly sisters Hancock and Richard undertook their review, they ruled out 'evidence' from awarding organisers and independent learning providers (ILPs) as 'biased from vested interests'.

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) recently published the results of an independent Process Evaluation of Apprenticeship Trailblazers by the Institute for Employment Studies.

Among their findings were that 'although the Richard Review recommended root and branch review of apprenticeships, many Trailblazers considered the current model was largely fit for purpose and of good quality.'

Very poor governance of sector skills councils (SSCs) by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills inspired Hancock to establish employer Trailblazer groups. Initially ILPs, SSCs and AOs were banned from these groups.

Common sense eventually prevailed and, as this report repeatedly documents, the involvement of these training professionals enhanced their work — "their (employer members) accounts suggested that bringing in expertise from awarding organisations and training providers had not undermined employer ownership and employers have been able to hold these organisations to account to ensure that what emerged was appropriate for the sector."

The pantomime's next act saw Baron Hardup Boles, recommend public sector FE colleges snatch two thirds of the apprenticeship business from ILPs.

Strange a Conservative minister should recommend such socialist ideals but in pantomime anything can happen, including political slap stick. Has he crossed the floor to replace Shadow Skills Minister Gordon Marsden?

It was one of Boles' predecessors, Norman Fowler who first brought the ILP sector into work-based learning (WBL) when seeking delivery partners for his Youth Training Scheme in the 1980s.

FE colleges excel at providing classroom and campus training. Equally, ILPs are well equipped to deliver on-site WBL and assessment.

The skillsets required to manage and deliver these two models are very different and cannot be acquired instantly.

Which FE principal or governor would embark on Trailblazers that have no schemes of work, end assessments and funding agreed

and no track record of success?

Ministers and civil servants choose to ignore that funding determines provider behaviour, whether from schools, sixth forms, FE colleges or ILPs.

Unintended consequences of end-testing Trailblazers will see providers teach to the test and not produce a competent all-round apprentice.

NVQs were introduced because employers complained one-off end tests did not demonstrate workplace competence. What goes around comes around — especially in panto land.

Our pantomime next act was Fairy Godmother Osborne producing £27bn out of his hat to 'save' FE. Aren't his audience smart enough to realise this old trick of promising low and then over delivering? Oh yes they are! Oh no they're not!

The creation of the Institute of Apprenticeships is welcomed. Every pantomime needs a chorus line to dance to the minister's tune. Its membership must include professionals from ILPs, AOs and SSCs, otherwise the mistakes mentioned in earlier paragraphs will be perpetuated.

The finale of the apprenticeship pantomime is the levy with the vision of millions of pounds floating from the skies like confetti to enable one and all to become an apprentice. Ninety nine per cent of companies being exempt from the levy disappears when the hundreds of thousands of self-employed sole traders registered as limited companies are deducted. In reality any organisation employing 140 or more staff will have to pay.

The levy will change apprenticeships for ever and should be welcomed. Levy avoidance or evasion schemes will be touted about.

There will be an increase in self-employment, agency staff and bosses taking lower wages and higher dividends to avoid levy payments.

Providers will have to sell apprenticeships to finance directors instead of HR departments. BIS and Ofsted will see substantial reductions in completion success rates as unwilling employees are conscripted by their company to undertake apprenticeships to recoup the levy.

How wise for this government to set apprenticeship starts as its 3m target and not completions.

When the pantomime season is over, let's hope the apprenticeship soap opera doesn't revert to a tragedy or, more likely, a farce. Merry Christmas and a happy new year everyone.



JO LAPPIN

Chief executive, Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership

Getting a move-on with ESF Neet programmes

Of the first six programmes aimed at provision for young people not in education, employment or training (Neet) funded by much-delayed European Social Fund (ESF) cash, one was in the Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership region. Jo Lappin outlines the process now tenders are finally open.

The decision by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) to move forward with the ESF tenders for Neet provision is very much welcomed. It provides real reassurance that the mobilisation of the ESF element of European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF) strategies has now properly started.

While the early progress with the Big Lottery was very positive, the delivery of significant activity and volume rests with the SFA and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) opt-ins.

The success of these will be critical to overall programme delivery at national level, particularly given that we are rapidly moving towards 2016 for a programme that was due to start in 2014.

It is understandable that the sector might be concerned about the timescales for the process, but the kind of organisations that are well placed to deliver these contracts will be used to operating at pace and will have considerable expertise of working with Neet clients.

They will also be very used to working with the SFA and understand the systems and processes, as they will already have completed the market entry pre-qualification process.

The role that individual local enterprise partnerships will play in the process differs from area to area based upon appetite and resource, with the SFA operating a flexible approach agreed in consultation with leps.

In Northamptonshire the focus has been on really adding value to the process and therefore concentrating on those elements that are most important to addressing local need. This started with working with the local ESIF Committee to develop Procurement Initiation Documents (PIDs) that fully reflected the specific needs of Northamptonshire, its labour market and the Neet client group, and importantly is genuinely additional to what is already being delivered in the locality.

Leps, working through their ESIF Committees will also have the opportunity to provide a strategic fit assessment into the decision making process, reviewing best fit with local needs, with DWP, as managing authority, ensuring that this is done in a

highly appropriate way that guards against vested interest.

Most Leps will take a very active role in both promoting the call for applications and supporting would-be applicants in developing their applications.

While nobody would have chosen to be working to very tight timescales, it is important that we grasp this opportunity to really get the ESF programme moving

Leps will also be very conscious of the timescales that applicants are working to, and will be looking to put on workshops as soon as possible, for example in Northamptonshire the first workshop for would-be applicants is taking place on December 16. All Leps will also have detailed bidding information on their website and are likely to provide direct communications to would-be applicants so that they are aware of all bidding activity and deadlines.

Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership is well placed to be in the first wave of procurement, as we have excellent relationships with the local employment and skills community through our extensive governance arrangements. The Employment and Skills Strategy Board, chaired by Steve Davies, principal of Moulton College, really understands the skills system and is crucial in getting the message out to those who have a contribution to make in delivering activity.

In conclusion, while nobody would have chosen to be working to very tight timescales, it is important that we grasp this opportunity to really get the ESF programme moving. The national negotiation process with the European Commission took much longer than anticipated, and this is outside the control of the opt-in organisations and local partners. They, like us, just want to get things moving.

Two visits from FE Commissioner Dr David Collins triggered first by financial problems and secondly by an Ofsted inadequate rating was the scene into which Tim Eyton-Jones stepped in February. Dr Collins has since drawn a line under his involvement and inspectors have also seen improvements. Mr Eyton-Jones spells out what's been happening at Barnfield.



TIM EYTON-JONES

Principal, Barnfield College

Barnfield becoming talk of the sector — for the right reasons

hit the national media.

I remember my first day as principal of Barnfield College very clearly — it was February 1, 2015. I stood and watched the students as they arrived at the front entrance. Their behaviour was appalling and the atmosphere was intimidating. I asked the (then) curriculum managers for information about the quality of teaching and learning in their respective areas, but their replies were vague and about everything and anything else.

If the college was going to make any progress, we had to start from scratch and take tough decisions. Links with Barnfield Federation were severed so we could focus on our core business. A new board and chair had already been appointed which left me free to focus on the college. Together with the new chair and board, I wrote a new three-year Development Plan entitled Reclaiming Excellence, which set out our values and

vision for the future.

Our students are now at the heart of everything we do. We want them to be successful on their course so they progress on to a relevant destination, but we also want them to develop as individuals so they become respected and valued members of the community. To enable them to achieve this, our priority is for them to experience excellent teaching and learning and an active enrichment programme in an outstanding learning environment. We have set ourselves high targets for their performance. Giving students a voice has also been key — they now have their say in everything we do, from staff recruitment to the governance of the college. It's their college after all.

We've achieved a lot in 10 months. We now have a fantastic staff team, as over one third of the staff have changed, mostly managers, but there's still a lot more to do. Following the financial problems of last year, we are

proud to have received an 'outstanding' for our financial plans from the Skills Funding Agency — something not many colleges can boast about today. We are still under close scrutiny, which is to be expected, but we are pleased to announce that the college is now showing improvements in all areas, with exceptional improvements in apprenticeships for both quality and numbers. It is now fast developing into one of the biggest and most successful areas of the college.

If the college was going to make any progress, we had to start from scratch and take tough decisions

When I was welcoming the students at 9am this morning, my thoughts went back to February 1 and it's quite remarkable how much has changed in such a short space of time. If you asked any of our students, they'd tell you that they are proud of their college now. I know I certainly am. In three years' time I really believe that Barnfield College will be the talk of the sector once again, but for all the right reasons.



MARK FLINN
Governors' board chair at Knowsley Community College, in Merseyside, holder of honours degree in mathematics from Edinburgh University and retired pro vice-chancellor (academic) at Edge Hill University in 2009

MARK FLINN

Maths GCSE and the 'sad case' of 'ministerially-driven curriculum change'

The strain of getting vocational learners over the GCSE English and maths finish line is behind much strain in the FE and skills sector, as recognised not least in Ofsted's annual report. But behind the policy is a view of GCSEs and the workplace that needs rethinking says Mark Flinn.

Last month, *FE Week* stated that 130,979 17+ learners were entered for GCSE maths in summer 2015, an increase of 57 per cent over the previous year [see English and maths supplement available on feweeek.co.uk]. Many will herald this as good news. But is GCSE maths fit for purpose as a qualification for vocational learners in the 21st Century?

What we used to refer to as "numeracy" has been replaced in ministerial terminology by "maths". But when we look closely at the GCSE maths subject content and assessment objectives for 2015 and beyond, as published by the Department for Education in 2013, we find much content unrelated to the needs of vocational learners in the modern world.

Where, for example, in the modern workplace (or elsewhere) are we ever required to use or apply the factorisation of quadratic expressions, quadratic equations, simultaneous equations, linear inequalities, sequences, Pythagoras' Theorem, the surface area of a sphere or pyramid, simple proofs in Euclidian geometry, the sine rule or the cosine rule?

In the days of computer-based design systems, what is the relevance of using "the standard ruler and compass constructions to....bisect a given angle"? In what vocational context is a knowledge of "Fibonacci type sequences and quadratic sequences" useful? Where might we "Derive the properties of regular polygons" or "identify and interpret gradients and intercepts of linear functions graphically and algebraically"? When is the "multiplication of vectors by a scalar" going to be useful in the workplace?

This is not to deny that elements of the GCSE subject content are important for all learners: working with number, fractions, percentages and decimals, measures,

graphs, ratio and proportion, mensuration, calculation, graphs, probability and statistics all have a fundamental place. But the totality of the GCSE subject content has not been designed to provide a foundation in numeracy — the understanding and application of numbers.

Why has the attainment of a grade C pass at GCSE become the 'gold standard' to which all, irrespective of future career plans, must aspire? Not on the basis of any research evidence, and not on the basis of a proven link between subject content and vocational needs

Rather, its purpose is to provide an important and (largely) necessary

foundation for the further study of maths and its applications in the sciences and technology at advanced level and beyond. Pythagoras, trigonometry and quadratic equations are of great importance in the further study and application of mathematics but are largely irrelevant to the needs of most vocational learners.

Many learners will wish, of course, to strive towards a grade C (or better) pass at GCSE in order to qualify for a future professional study. But most of the learners who are struggling to move from a grade D to a grade C in maths are unlikely to progress to advanced level and beyond. For many of them, a grade D pass represents a hard-won and creditable achievement which may not, even with the best of efforts, be improved upon. Yet the new requirement imposed on these learners, and the FE sector, is forcing those learners through irrelevant learning hoops, when that time and teacher resources could usefully be employed in reinforcing their core numeracy skills. No-one denies the importance of developing core numeracy skills, but can anyone demonstrate that GCSE maths, as currently specified, is fit for this purpose?

So why has the attainment of a grade C pass at GCSE become the 'gold standard' to which all, irrespective of future career plans, must aspire? Not on the basis of any research evidence, and not on the basis of a proven link between subject content and vocational needs. As with other examples of ministerially-driven curriculum change, it seems to have been driven by personal experience and prejudice. It is sad that educational policy is made in this way.

CAMPUS ROUND-UP



From left: instructor Chris Coe, instructor Tom Calcutt, vice principal Gary Horne, health and safety manager Max Fox, principal Alison Andreas, director of faculty for construction Adam Ward, and instructor Shaun Fox

Up, up and away in Colchester

The sky was no limit for the executive team at Colchester Institute as they took part in a working at heights training session to launch their new Training Tower and Enclosed Space facility.

The team, which included principal Alison Andreas, spent the morning with the college's health and safety instructors, where they demonstrated tower safety, appropriate use of equipment and climbing techniques.

Ms Andreas said: "Although I have to admit that I was a little apprehensive about the climb, the sense of achievement made it all worthwhile and the view from the top was



fantastic."

At 52ft high, the new Training Tower and Enclosed Space facility will allow the college to deliver mandatory training qualifications, to support regional growth sectors including telecommunications, rail, energy, and general construction and engineering.

The training tower is also available for use by businesses and community groups for activities including team building, personal development and training staff.

Lighting the way for Santa



Back from left: learner Dan Hewitt, aged 32, and lecturer Nick Doyle. Front from left: learners Kyle Hickman, Cha-lee Foster, Reece Morgan, Jaye Collinson, all four 17, and Anjali Latham-Remtulla, 20

Santa's sleigh will be jingling all the way this year thanks to the helping hand of South Cheshire College livewire students.

Electrical installation learners are rewiring a trailer that will take to the streets of Sandbach in the run-up to the festive period.

As well as providing new lighting cables, the group have also been using their skills to improve the sleigh's sound system to blast out Christmas carols and songs. The sleigh will

be used by Sandbach Round Table.

Electrical installation level three learner Reece Morgan, aged 17, is one of the students working on the project.

He said: "This is something a bit different but when we found out about the project we were pleased to get involved and help out.

"Hopefully, the sleigh will really capture everyone's attention when it hits the streets of Sandbach."

Animal instincts are no great shakes for Dr Grant

A Hartpury College lecturer's ground-breaking study with NASA has caught the attention of the Discovery Channel and will feature in a series that aims to unravel baffling phenomena, writes Billy Camden.

Dr Rachel Grant will appear on the Discovery Channel as part of a 'NASA Unexplained Files' series.

The visiting associate principal lecturer at Hartpury College will appear for her research which looks into whether animal behaviour can alert us to natural disasters.

Dr Grant's studies first started in 2009 near the city of L'Aquila, Italy, while a more recent study documents changes in animal activity before a large earthquake in Peru.

"I was working in Italy studying breeding behaviour of common toads when one day I went to conduct my research as usual and, to my surprise, there were no toads at all," said Dr Grant.

"This continued for a few days and then five days after the disappearance of the toads, there was a magnitude 6.3 earthquake at L'Aquila, around 50 miles from the site of my research."

After the earthquake, the toads returned to the area and Dr Grant decided to delve deeper what had happened.

She published findings from Italy that looked for reasons for their disappearances, which resulted in Professor Friedemann Freund, a NASA scientist, contacting her about research he had been conducting on the behaviour of rocks under stress.



Dr Rachel Grant in the animal management centre at Hartpury College

And Hartpury College learners have already been given a greater insight into the findings when Dr Grant presented her work this month.

"I think it is important for students to see real research that has been going on," she said.

"Hearing about the process of how research happens, the pitfalls and the highlights, and some of the triumphs, I think it is nice for students to see the whole process rather than just hearing 'so and so in 2010 said this'.

"I took them through how I started the research, what went wrong, what went right, what we found out and some of the press coverage on various papers that will give

them an idea of real research."

The learners heard how, before an earthquake, stressed rock releases charged particles which are involved in chemical reactions at the ground surface, forming substances likely to irritate animals.

She felt that changes to the natural environment occurring before earthquakes



A raza-billed curassow caught by Dr Grant's motion camera in Peru
PHOTO: TEAM Network

could cause changes in animal behaviours.

Dr Grant then used motion triggered wildlife cameras in a national park in Peru to demonstrate that the disappearance of toads was because of earthquake activity.

After publishing her findings, Dr Grant appeared on various TV and radio shows all over the world including BBC News. The episode of Nasa Unexplained Files will be broadcast in the UK next summer.

Dr Grant said: "I've done quite a lot of filming in the past so it has become a bit routine but it will be very exciting when I see the research come out in the summer."

Second to this discovery, Dr Grant notes her PhD research, which looked at amphibians' reaction to the lunar cycle and found that several species mate around the time of a full moon, as her next biggest research finding.

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Send your stories with pictures to campus@feweek.co.uk including names, ages and course details of students where applicable

& MOVERS SHAKERS

Your weekly guide
to who's new and
who's leaving

Liz Rees has been appointed as the new director of Unionlearn, the learning and skills wing of the Trades Union Congress (TUC).

She takes on the role after a number of years as head of Trade Union Education, where she was responsible for the TUC's programme of workplace representatives' training.

Unionlearn works to help unions in the delivery of learning opportunities for their members as well as managing the Union Learning Fund. The organisation is also

responsible for providing education and training opportunities for workplace reps and professionals through TUC Education.

Ms Rees said: "I'm really pleased to get the chance to lead this vital area and to work with such a great team.

"Union reps get things done at the workplace in a way that no others can. They are trusted by their colleagues and maintain good relations with employers so can take up issues on behalf of the workforce that external agencies cannot."

She replaces Tom Wilson, who said:

"Looking back, the best thing is the people. TUC staff are a lovely bunch and Unionlearn and union staff are completely committed to union learning and union learners.

"There is a great team spirit and unions are not shy about standing up for what they believe is best for their learners. After all, learning is about gaining confidence, speaking out, and questioning received wisdom."

In Walthamstow, Sir George Monoux Sixth Form College principal Paolo Ramella is stepping down from his position after seven years.

Current vice principal of corporate services David Ball, who has been at the college for eight years, has been made acting principal until a permanent appointment is made shortly after the New Year.

Chair of the college Alan Well said: "With

the area reviews of sixth form colleges about to take place, Paolo feels that after seven years at the college in which we have seen various improvements, this is an opportune time for him to step down and make some time to enjoy other interests.

"The corporation has agreed to let him promptly hand over to an acting principal. However, he will remain employed and available to advise the corporation until the end of the year as required.

"The corporation would wish to thank Paolo for all of his hard work and achievements since he joined the college and wish him well for the future."

Dr Alan Taylor has returned to Darlington College for his second stint at teaching, this time as an engineering lecturer.

Fresh from the world of steel, Dr Taylor joins the college from Teesside manufacturer SSI.

He worked for 18 years in research and development for British Steel in Middlesbrough before joining the Teesside Education Improvement Service, studying a PGCE and teaching computing at Darlington College.

Curriculum manager for engineering, science and automotive technology Neil Bowen said: "Dr Taylor will be able to give his students incredible insight into the ups and downs of global industries like steel and engineering."



Liz Rees



Tom Wilson



Paolo Ramella



David Ball



Dr Alan Taylor

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The ideal candidate will have a commercial perspective and understand the needs of customers, they will be an excellent leader with great communication and motivation skills. They will have previous experience managing customer services teams, on-line support, database management and related systems.

Knowledge of the vocational skills and education market is essential including the management of assessments and examinations. Experience of working in a regulated environment is also important, as is any direct experience in education, training or with awarding and assessment organisations.

NOCN is a progressive, non-profit organisation creating amazing opportunities for its customers, employees and partners.

For further details and a full job description, visit:
www.nocn.org.uk/jobs

Application instructions:

Email CV and covering letter explaining why you are best suited for the position, to:

Dr David Hutchinson, HR Director.

Email: david.hutchinson@nocn.org.uk



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This is an exciting opportunity to join a fast growing training provider based in the North East, playing an integral role in the future development of our business as our Director of Apprenticeships.

Learning Curve Group is a directly funded Skills and Education Funding Agency training provider that has an ambitious growth strategy in support of our employers and learners. In support of meeting the Government agenda to deliver 3 million Apprentices by 2020, we are looking to recruit a Director of Apprenticeships. We are looking for a person who has a deep understanding of how apprenticeships work and how we can match the needs of the employer and apprentice to make a perfect match. Our ideal person will understand the funding and delivery rules around apprenticeships, can work with and motivate assessors, engage with learners, employers and stakeholders at all levels and have an exceptional eye for detail.

• Director of Apprenticeships 50k p.a. plus bonus

With a role like this there is lots to do but below is a little snapshot of the experience we need you to have and what we want you to do:

- A proven track record of delivering large SASE apprenticeship provision and growing new areas for apprenticeship funding.
- Knowledge and understanding of the anticipated changes to apprenticeship delivery to support us to move to deliver Trailblazers by 2017.
- Previous experience of successful business development ideally, in a B2B service sector, with a background which includes both sales and marketing.
- Previous experience of operating at management level and with a proven track record of meeting and exceeding challenging targets through your own activity and through the effective management of staff and resources.
- Significantly contribute to our strategic development plan, which sets out the vision and key targets for the growth of our direct delivery apprenticeships.
- Implement our strategic development plan to grow and develop apprenticeship provision in key sectors as a result of LMI research and intelligence gathering.
- Identify and implement ongoing changes to delivery and employer relationships that will be required to support Trailblazer Apprenticeships from 2017 and beyond.
- Monitor and manage apprenticeship recruitment, success and progression in line with budgeted revenue requirements.

If this is you, this is an ideal opportunity for you to join a dynamic organisation with a real desire to transform our learner's lives and help employers to grow their businesses. With our growth plans we are looking to fill this key full time, permanent position which will be based in the North East. For a full job description, and to find out more about this exciting opportunity, visit:

www.learningcurvegroup.co.uk

To apply for this role, please send your CV and covering letter to hr@learningcurvegroup.co.uk or for more information please call 01388 741105, where a member of the HR team will be more than happy to talk to you.

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We require **enthusiastic** and **experienced** classroom tutors to deliver English and Maths GCSE and Functional skills to a wide range of learners working on vocational programmes. Applicants must have a commitment to delivering **outstanding** teaching, learning and assessment to every learner, every time.

These roles are full time and permanent, requiring classroom delivery from our Bournemouth or Fareham campuses, remote working from home and field visits to support learners or assessors.

If you want to join our passionate team whilst we shape lives and improve skills, email our recruitment team now on recruitment@pgon.co.uk quoting the following reference numbers.

Ref. 3148 **Learning and Skills Tutor (English) - Bournemouth**
 Ref. 3149 **Learning and Skills Tutor (English) - Fareham**
 Ref. 3150 **Learning and Skills Tutor (Maths) - Fareham**

Closing date 4th January 2016

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New College Swindon is a very successful Further Education College providing excellent education and training to over 10,000 learners; of these 3,300 are 16-18.

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We believe that strong leadership is key to facing the opportunities and challenges ahead so that we can secure the best possible outcomes for our learners.

With the retirement of our current Director of Curriculum, we invite applications from forward-thinking candidates to become our senior lead on curriculum and quality improvement.

For more information and to apply, please visit our website www.newcollege.ac.uk

CLOSING DATE: 3RD JANUARY 2016
INTERVIEW DATE: TO BE CONFIRMED

www.newcollege.ac.uk

Sunderland College

EXTERNAL VACANCY

TRAINER/ASSESSOR (MATHS AND ENGLISH) X2

POST REF: 5795, 37 HOURS PER WEEK.
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We are seeking to appoint two suitably qualified Trainer/Assessors to work within the department of English and Maths. The majority of work will involve workplace delivery of Maths and English qualifications including our Apprenticeship provision. Successful applicants should hold a Degree, relevant teaching qualification (or be willing to work towards this) and a proven track record of delivering English and Maths qualifications with successful outcomes to a diverse range of learners. Applicants should also possess an assessor's qualification.

Applicants should be able to demonstrate relevant experience in their personal statement, giving practical examples of how they fulfil the person specification. Our Trainer Assessors need to be independently mobile and must be able to travel throughout the North East and in some instances may need to travel further afield.

Due to the nature of this post you will be required to undertake an Enhanced Disclosure Check. To find out more about this great opportunity visit sunderlandcollege.ac.uk/vacancies alternatively email vacancies@sunderlandcollege.ac.uk or call 0191 511 6046 to request an application pack.

ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY 5PM ON THURSDAY 07 JANUARY 2016.

It is envisaged that interviews will take place the week commencing 11 January 2016.

We are working towards equal opportunities and welcome applications from all sections of the community. We are committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.



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Rachael Collier on **01225 328734**

Our ideal candidate will be able to take up this role
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You will have a proven track record in leading a successful team, business-to-business marketing ideally combined with a sound understanding of the FE sector and be a strategic thinker who enjoys delivering measurable outputs.

To apply visit www.dudleycol.ac.uk

Closing date: 3rd January 2016.

All successful applicants will need to undertake an enhanced disclosure and barring service check and children and adults barred list checks where the applicant will be employed in a regulated activity.



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Lancaster & Morecambe College

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37 hours per week

Job Ref: MS 867

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For full details including how to apply, please visit our website www.lmc.ac.uk

Interviews will take place on Thursday, 7th January 2016.

Closing date: Thursday, 17th December 2015

Contact information:

Email: jobs@lmc.ac.uk

Phone: 01524 521507

Address: Morecambe Road, Lancaster, LA1 2TY





FULL TIME MATHS & ENGLISH TUTOR/ TEACHER - £35,000PA OTE

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Due to the outstanding successes of our work to date, we are looking to recruit a new team of 15 experienced Skills for Life tutors.

You will be delivering English and Maths from Entry Level through to Level 2, contextualised with a vocational award. Some delivery will be in the Health and Social Care sector, and therefore any experience in the H&SC sector would be an advantage but not essential. The role will be working on a peripatetic basis, delivering in your region. Willingness to travel and your own transport are essential.

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA - PLEASE DO NOT APPLY IF YOU CAN'T COMPLY:

- Full time ONLY with flexible hours
- Have achieved a recognised full teaching qualification - Cert ed/ PGCE/ DTLLS or equivalent
- Experience in teaching English and/or Maths
- Outstanding personal written and verbal communication skills
- A driving license and access to your own transportation

HIGHLY DESIRED CRITERIA

- Experience of working with adult learners
- Working towards or have achieved a Level 4/5 Subject Specialist qualification in literacy and/ or Numeracy
- Excellent ICT Skills

The successful candidate will also be required to have a valid DBS Clearance Check. In the first instance, please send an email outlining your recent relevant experience together with your CV. NCC Skills Ltd is an Equal Opportunities Employer.

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SCHOOL OF FOUNDATION STUDIES

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Hours: Variable

Contract Type: Fixed Term

Grade: Tutor Grades 1 – 2 (depending on course level)

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Closing Date: 9 am, Monday 21 December 2015

Ref: 2522

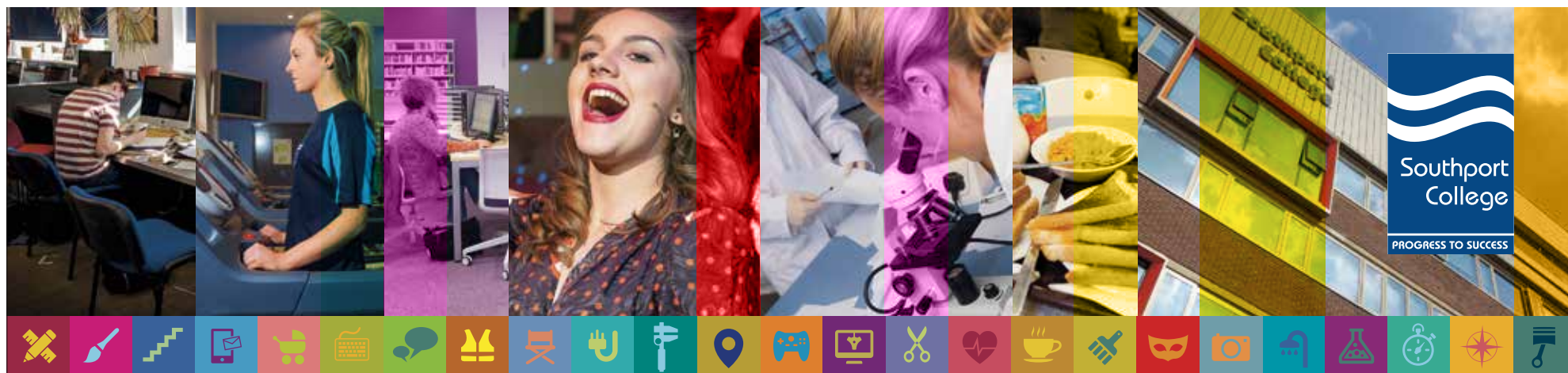
The College is looking for Tutors to teach a range of Maths classes ranging predominantly from Entry 1 to Level 1 Mathematics. Classes are predominantly daytime, with the possibility of evening work (18.30 – 21.30) as well as short-term cover.

Applicants should have or be working towards a certified teaching qualification and have a good understanding of Entry 1 to Level 1 curriculum.

To apply, please download and complete an application form from our website; www.racc.ac.uk/jobs and return and to hr@racc.ac.uk by the above stated closing date for your application to be considered.

RACC

Richmond Adult Community College



Southport College Lecturer in Maths

Ref: L01812151

We have vacancies equivalent to 1.35 FTE and invite individuals to apply for their preferred fraction.

The full time equivalent salary for the post is £23,502 to £29,337 per annum

The closing date is Friday 18th December 2015 at 12.00 noon.

The role is to teach Functional Skills and GCSE in Mathematics to classroom-based learners, including those aged 16-18 and/or Apprentices, within a specified curriculum area and other areas of the College.

Sessions will be conducted on the main college campus for both classroom-based learners and Apprentices. The successful candidate will also be required to deliver in learners' workplaces and at employer venues for Apprenticeships

The successful candidate will have relevant teaching experience of Functional Skills and/or GCSE in Mathematics, and be able to meet the flexible access and delivery demands of the employed, together with adult and 16-18 learners.

For further details please visit our website or email personnel@southport.ac.uk or call 01704 392721/392723 during office hours.

Southport College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. If successful, you may be required to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Disclosure.



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DAY TWO - 17TH

FROM FRAMEWORKS TO STANDARDS

DAY THREE - 18TH

ASSESSMENT - PLANS, END-POINT ASSESSMENTS AND APPROVED ORGANISATIONS

WORKSHOP TOPICS WILL INCLUDE:

FEES, FUNDING, LEVY AND DIGITAL VOUCHERS | FROM FRAMEWORKS TO STANDARDS | ASSESSMENT - PLANS, END-POINT ASSESSMENTS AND APPROVED ORGANISATIONS | DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS | ENGLISH AND MATH FOR APPRENTICES | TRAILBLAZER EMPLOYER GROUPS AND STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT | BEST PRACTICE WHEN SUB-CONTRACTING APPRENTICESHIP DELIVERY | GROUP OR APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING AGENCIES | CAREERS ADVICE OR MARKETING | INSPECTION AND AUDIT

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AAC 2016 HOST: EMILY MAITLIS
BROADCASTER & JOURNALIST



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FE Week Sudoku challenge

How to play: Fill in all blank squares making sure that each row, column and 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9

			4			2		
			7			1		
5	9	2				4	3	
3		5				8	4	
	4	7				6		3
	1	8				7	6	2
		4			8			
		6			2			

Difficulty: **EASY**

		9	3		8	2		
5			9		2			1
	2	7				4	1	
	5		6		1		2	
	9	8				6	3	
3			2		9			6
		2	4		6	8		

Difficulty: **MEDIUM**

Solutions: Next week

Last Week's solutions

6	8	9	3	4	1	7	5	2
5	7	3	9	2	6	4	1	8
2	4	1	7	8	5	6	9	3
1	5	2	4	6	7	8	3	9
3	9	4	1	5	8	2	7	6
7	6	8	2	3	9	1	4	5
4	1	5	6	9	2	3	8	7
8	2	7	5	1	3	9	6	4
9	3	6	8	7	4	5	2	1

Difficulty: **EASY**

2	6	1	9	5	4	8	3	7
3	8	9	6	7	1	4	5	2
7	4	5	2	8	3	1	9	6
6	7	2	5	9	8	3	1	4
5	1	4	7	3	2	9	6	8
8	9	3	1	4	6	7	2	5
9	3	6	8	2	7	5	4	1
1	5	8	4	6	9	2	7	3
4	2	7	3	1	5	6	8	9

Difficulty: **MEDIUM**

Spot the difference to WIN an FE Week mug



Spot five differences. First correct entry wins an FE Week mug. Text your name and picture of your completed spot the difference to 07969 166 374.